

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS REMAIN AT RISK

Iranian male, **Ali Bikas**, a human rights defender (HRD), is believed to remain in detention in Section 209 of Evin Prison under the control of the intelligence ministry, where he is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. **Shiva Nazar Ahari**, a female journalist, blogger and HRD was released on bail from Evin Prison, Tehran, on 23 September. Male HRD defender, **Naseh Faridi** was released on bail on or around 1 September, about two weeks after having appeared in court.

Shiva Nazar Ahari member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR), was arrested on 14 June 2009 and was detained in Evin Prison for three months. The amount for her bail was initially set at 5000 million rials (US\$500,000), which her family was unable to pay. On 16 September 2009, her bail was reduced to 2000 million rials (US\$200,000), an amount that her family could raise. She was released on 23 September 2009 after the bail had been paid. She is not known to have been formally charged.

No further information is available regarding **Ali Bikas**, a member of the Student Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners (SCDPP) and an activist for the rights of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority, who was also arrested in mid-June 2009 in the wake of the disputed presidential elections. It is believed that he is still held in Evin Prison and it is not known whether he has access to family visits or a lawyer. Ali Bikas appeared in a "show trial" session on 14 August 2009 in which he was accused of being a "field agent for a velvet coup". **Naseh Faridi**, also a member of the SCDPP, who appeared in the same "show trial" session, was accused in a judicial indictment, of passing information to the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, a proscribed organization based abroad, on account of his activities in the SCDPP, including interviews with foreign media. He was released on bail about two weeks later.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ali Bikas, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association;
- urging the authorities to protect him from all forms of torture and other ill-treatment and to grant him immediate and regular access to his family and lawyer;
- calling for any charges against Shiva Nazar Ahari, Ali Bikas and Naseh Faridi imposed solely on account of their human rights activities, including their work publicising human rights violations, to be dropped.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 November TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: Via website:

<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/81/Default.aspx>

1st starred box: your given name; 2nd starred box: your family name; 3rd: your email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of Special Parliamentary

Committee to review post-election arrests

Parviz Sorouri, Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 334 40309

Email: sorouri@majlis.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director

Evin Prison, Chamran Highway, Near Hotel Azadi, Dasht-e Behesht Street, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: Via website:

<http://www.tehranprisons.ir/index.php?Module=SMMComplain>

Click (E) beside boxes to change alphabet.

1st box:blank; 2nd box:your name; 3rd box: your email address; 4th and 5th box:blank; 6th box: your city; 7th box:message subject; 8th box: message; 9th box:blank; 10th box: select third option; 11th box: click to send

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA: 239/09 Index: MDE 13/098/2009 Iran. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/098/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Student Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners (SCDPP) was founded in 1998. It provides support to political prisoners and their families, without regard to their political affiliation. It was denied permission by the Iranian authorities to register as an NGO, on the grounds that “there are no political prisoners in Iran”. The CHRR was founded in 2006 and campaigns against all kinds of human rights violations, including against women, children, prisoners, workers and others.

Shiva Nazar Ahari was the fourth secretary general of the SCDPP, but is no longer a member. She is a founding member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR) and is also a member of the registered NGO, the Society for the Defence of Street and Working Children, which was closed by police in 2008, but which was later allowed to reopen. She is also active in the Council for the defence of the right to education and in the One Million Signatures campaign (also known as the Campaign for Equality), which aims to collect a million signatures of Iranians to a petition demanding the reform of legislation which discriminates against women. In 2008 she was banned from beginning a higher degree in civil engineering on account of her past activities. Shiva Nazar Ahari was previously detained for three weeks in 2004, during a demonstration with families of political prisoners outside a UN building in Tehran. She received a one-year prison sentence, suspended for five years, which could still be implemented. She has been summoned for interrogation by intelligence officials on numerous occasions and has received many threatening phone calls apparently from security officials.

Ali Bikas, a member of Iran’s Azerbaijani minority, was previously detained following student demonstrations in Tabriz University in 1999 which erupted after plain-clothes groups apparently acting on behalf of the Iranian authorities stormed into university campuses and assaulted students who had gathered to protest against the closure of a reformist newspaper, *Salam*. Initially sentenced to five years’ imprisonment for his part in the demonstrations, the sentence was reduced to two years on appeal and he was then pardoned by the Supreme Leader and released in December 2000. He is a member of the Islamic Iran Azerbaijani’s Association and was an active member of Mir Hossein Mousavi’s recent election campaign, until he resigned in protest at a video allegedly showing former President Khatami, who supported Mir-Hosein Mousavi’s campaign, telling jokes insulting to Azerbaijanis.

Naseh Faridi is a former chairman of the Islamic Students Association in the Teachers’ Training University in Tehran and is a member of the central committee of the SCDPP.

Demonstrations against the disputed June election were swiftly repressed, with dozens killed and hundreds injured by excessive use of force. Most of the more than 4000 detained across the country were tortured in detention, with methods including rape, and some died as a result. While acknowledging some violations occurred, the authorities appear to be trying to hide the truth of what happened by closing down the offices of those collecting evidence of violations, and arresting some. Grossly unfair mass trial sessions have been held in which detainees have “confessed” – apparently under duress to instigating the unrest and overthrow the system. These “confessions” have been accepted by the court. Some of those on trial were filmed making similar “confessions”, which were aired on TV before their trials took place. On 20 September 2009, the Supreme Leader said in a sermon, “Any confession in a court, before cameras, before millions of viewers, is religiously, and in the eye of wise people, credible.” Some of those on trial could face the death penalty.

Further information on UA: 239/09 Index: MDE 13/101/2009 Issue Date: 1 October 2009

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